

# Mechanical Memories Magazine

ISSUE 42

FEB. 2010

*Broadstairs Jetty*



*The only UK magazine for collectors of Vintage Penny Slot Machines*

# Mechanical Memories Magazine

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**Published by: Antique Automatic Amusements**

**Editor: Jerry Chattenton**

10 Bedford Road

Dartford DA1 1SR

☎07710 285360

e-mail [jerry.mmm@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jerry.mmm@tiscali.co.uk)

[www.pennymachines.co.uk/MMM.htm](http://www.pennymachines.co.uk/MMM.htm)

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# Editorial

Hello again, and here we are with issue 42 (I'm hoping a little earlier in the month than last time). I'd like to comment on the vast improvement we've seen in the weather, and what a bright, warm, sunny day it is today.....unfortunately, at the time of writing, it's bloody snowing again! Are we never going to see an end to this seemingly eternal winter weather? Next week is school half term, and I was really hoping to be open at Brighton, but unless the weather improves, I really don't think it will be worth it.

For the benefit of new subscribers, I operate vintage penny slot machines at my arcade in Brighton, 'Mechanical Memories Museum', situated on the seafront, which brings me to the next point. Over the last few years, I've featured in the magazine most of the larger venues where the public can play vintage slot machines. These include: Clive Baker's arcade on Southport pier; Darren Hesketh's arcade in Cheshire; Peter Williamson's Model Village at Great Yarmouth, and most recently, Stuart Dale wrote a piece on Arreton Barns on the Isle of Wight. However, there are two attractions that I can think of that haven't yet been featured, these being Wookey Hole and Watermouth Castle. So, if any of you visit either of these venues in the course of the year (both in the west country), please write an article for the magazine. And don't forget to take lots of pictures.

Well, that's about it for now.

Till next time,

All the best

***Jerry***

**Front Cover picture**, *early cast iron machines on Broadstairs jetty, c.1900.  
Most prominent being a BAC metal label stamper.*



# News and Coming Events

## Early Start for Carters

Carters Steam Fair will be starting the season with a two week stay at Battersea Park, south London, from 13<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> March. The fair will be of reduced size, including the Gallopers, Ark, various juvenile rides and stalls. You'll be pleased to know that Carters Vintage Penny Arcade will also be open. Also present will be James Meesham's Wall of Death, which I understand will be travelling with Carters throughout the year. This will be a great addition to the fair, and should prove a popular attraction alongside Carters impressive line-up of vintage rides and stalls.

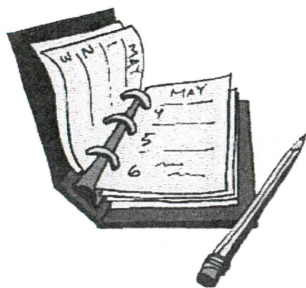
I hope to visit Carters during their two-week stay at Battersea, as it has been a couple of years since I last featured the fair. I'll certainly get some pictures of the arcade and machines for the magazine, but do try to visit sometime during the course of the year – I promise you won't be disappointed.

## Grand Pier, Weston-Super-Mare

In contrast to the sad state of Hastings pier, and its uncertain future (as I mentioned last month), things are looking much brighter for Weston-Super-Mare's Grand pier. You'll recall the tragic fire in 2008, in which the pavilion was completely destroyed, well I was pleased to hear recently that the new pavilion is due to be completed this summer. Here's an artist's impression of what it will look like:







## *Dates for your diary*

**Carters Steam Fair** 13<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> March  
Battersea Park, London

**Brighton Jukebox Show** 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> April  
Brighton racecourse

**Bonhams Mechanical Music & Scientific Instruments Sale** 28<sup>th</sup> April  
Knightsbridge

**Bonhams Mechanical Music & Scientific Instruments Sale** 18<sup>th</sup> May  
Knowle

**Great Dorset Steam Fair** 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> September  
Tarrant Hinton, Dorset

**Jukebox Madness Show** 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> September  
Kempton Park racecourse

**MMM Vintage Slot Collectors' Show & Auction** 28<sup>th</sup> November  
Coventry (Provisional)

**Bonhams Mechanical Music & Scientific Instruments Sale** 7<sup>th</sup> December  
Knowle

Don't forget – if you know of any event which would be of interest to readers of the magazine, please let me know so that I can include details in these pages.

# Dreamland

## MARGATE

### Save Dreamland Update February 2010

One of the things that pleases me most about the progress we are making with Dreamland Margate is the amount of press support we have had over the years. This has really raised the profile of the campaign and the work that we are doing locally, nationally and internationally. Most of the national newspapers have covered the campaign on more than one occasion, as have websites, forums, blogs, magazines, TV and radio. Over the past three months alone we have been featured in the Daily Mail, Daily Express, BBC News website, BBC Radio 2, BBC and ITV local TV news as well as numerous specialist magazines and local newspapers.

The February issue of Coast magazine features Dreamland prominently, as the first in a new series called 'Save Our Seaside'. The Editor's message explains: "...this month we are launching our Save Our Seaside campaign (or SOS for short) to highlight the plight of coastal buildings that have fallen on hard times. The campaign starts with the inspiring story of Margate's Dreamland pleasure park, rescued by campaigners. They've proved that grass roots lobbying can change things for the better. Let's see what difference we can make."

Dreamland, Margate is featured in a two-page article, where architectural historian Allan Brodie starts the series with "the makings of a success story" as he briefly sets out the history of Dreamland, bringing it right up-to-date with the park's closure and Scenic Railway fire. The article states: "Work is about to begin on the creation of the world's first heritage amusement park, due to open in 2012. Thirteen vintage rides have been collected and there are plans to obtain another 15."

Over the past few years, we have suffered from very little negative press coverage, although a notorious article in The Times newspaper was very unfavourable about our proposals (they did, however, print my rebuttal a couple of days later, so that is OK). But the odd bit of unenthusiastic journalism is very much outweighed by the increased profile we have received by the continuous media interest in the project. I wonder how many of our supporters (and even our funders!) have stumbled upon us because of one of these articles.

Changing the subject slightly, anybody interested in amusement park history should book themselves into a special conference in Southport in April. This year's Institute for Archaeologists Conference will feature an entire morning session devoted to amusement park heritage, and Dreamland will feature heavily. Hosted by Jason Wood, who has

provided heritage advice to The Dreamland Trust for a number of years, the session is called 'Fairgrounds for Debate: celebrating the heritage of amusement parks' and will run from 9.45 to 12.45 on Thursday 15 April at the Southport Theatre & Convention Centre at Southport, Merseyside.

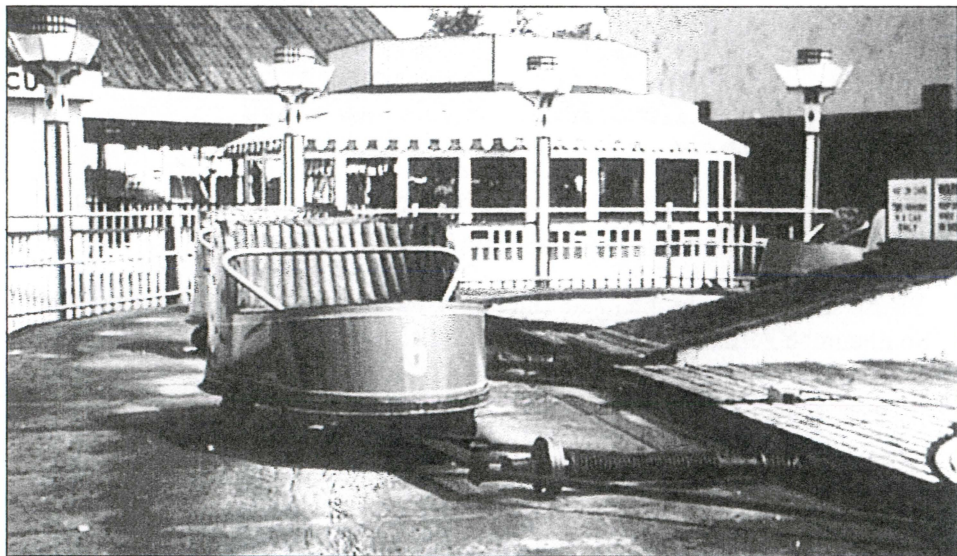
Six speakers will be talking on various aspects of the history and heritage of amusement parks, from their early twentieth-century origins to the demise of many in the early twenty-first century. I am the final speaker of the morning, and will be talking about saving Britain's amusement park heritage and the reawakening of Dreamland. With talks about early amusement parks, Southport's Pleasureland and London's Battersea Fun Fair from other speakers (who include author John Walton and the National Fairground Archive's Ian Trowell) this is certain to be a very informative morning. Although the conference runs for three days, it is possible to book for the Thursday only. You can find out more details at the Institute for Archaeologists website ([archaeologists.net](http://archaeologists.net)) or by telephoning 0118 378 6446.

### *Nick Laister*

Chair of Trustees, The Dreamland Trust

[www.dreamlandmargate.com](http://www.dreamlandmargate.com)

[www.savedreamland.co.uk](http://www.savedreamland.co.uk)

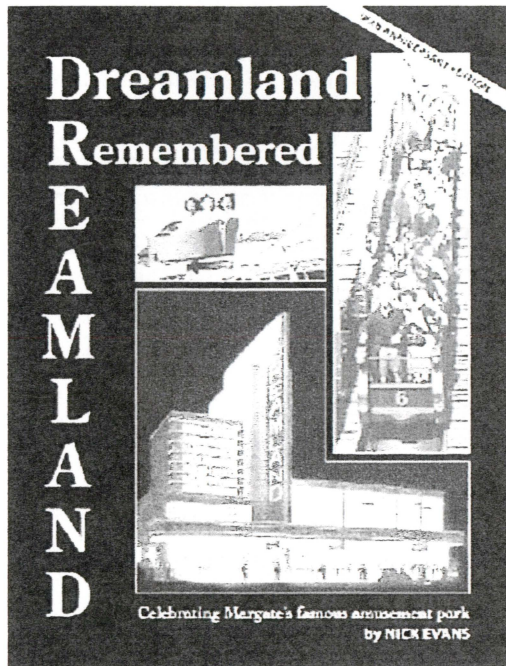


*The original Dreamland Whip, c.1950s.*



# **Dreamland Remembered: 90th Anniversary Edition**

by Nick Evans



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# Dreamland Remembered

## A revue by Jerry Chattenton

When Nick first advertised this book in the December issue, I did say I would do a short revue for the January magazine. Unfortunately, there wasn't room last month, so here it is. I received my copy before Christmas, which allowed me plenty of time to look at the pictures over the festive period (oh come on, we all do it)! If the book contained only the pictures, it would still be an absolute treasure, but it is certainly more than just a picture book. It gives a most informative account of the history of one of this country's most famous amusement parks, from the 'Hall by the Sea' in the 1870s through to Dreamland's eventual demise in recent years. First published in 2003, this latest 2009 edition also gives an account of the Save Dreamland Campaign, the subsequent Dreamland Trust and its plans and aspirations for the future Dreamland Heritage Park.

However, like all good books, Dreamland Remembered starts at the beginning. The Victorians and Edwardians saw attractions evolve over a period of five decades on the huge site that was to become Dreamland. Beautiful ornamental gardens, music hall entertainment and ballroom dancing were among the early attractions, but perhaps the most exciting for Victorian visitors was Lord George Sanger's Menagerie. Other attractions included wax works, fairground rides and roller-skating. The evolution of the pleasure park continued, and 'Dreamland' opened in 1920; its biggest attraction being the magnificent Scenic Railway (now the oldest of only two remaining in the UK).

The author, Nick Evens, then takes us on an atmospheric and informative journey through Dreamland's glory days of the pre and post war era. Popular rides, which could be found at all the best amusement parks, included: Caterpillar, Tumble Bug, Whip, Brooklands Speedway cars, and almost uniquely, the Sky Wheels, which came to Dreamland in 1953, having first been installed at Battersea Funfair in 1951. Only one other set of Sky Wheels existed in this country (at Great Yarmouth). However, like all major parks of this era, Dreamland offered much more than thrilling rides. Visitors could enjoy lavish restaurants and bars; dancing in the magnificent ballroom, and the latest films in the Dreamland cinema (now a listed building).

The book continues with the decline in the 1970s; the Bembom Brothers 'theme park' era of the 80s and 90s, and the final brief Jimmy Godden era of more recent years, when most of Dreamland was turned into a car park. The text is well written and researched, and supported by a wonderful collection of photographs and contemporary advertising. I can thoroughly recommend this excellent book, so order your copy now!

*Jerry*

# Peerless Pictures

By Johnny Burley

Firstly, let me say it's been of great interest reading articles in the MMM recently of other peoples machines and how they obtained them etc. It all helps keep 'our' magazine alive, and helps Jerry stop burning the midnight oil. Keep 'em coming.

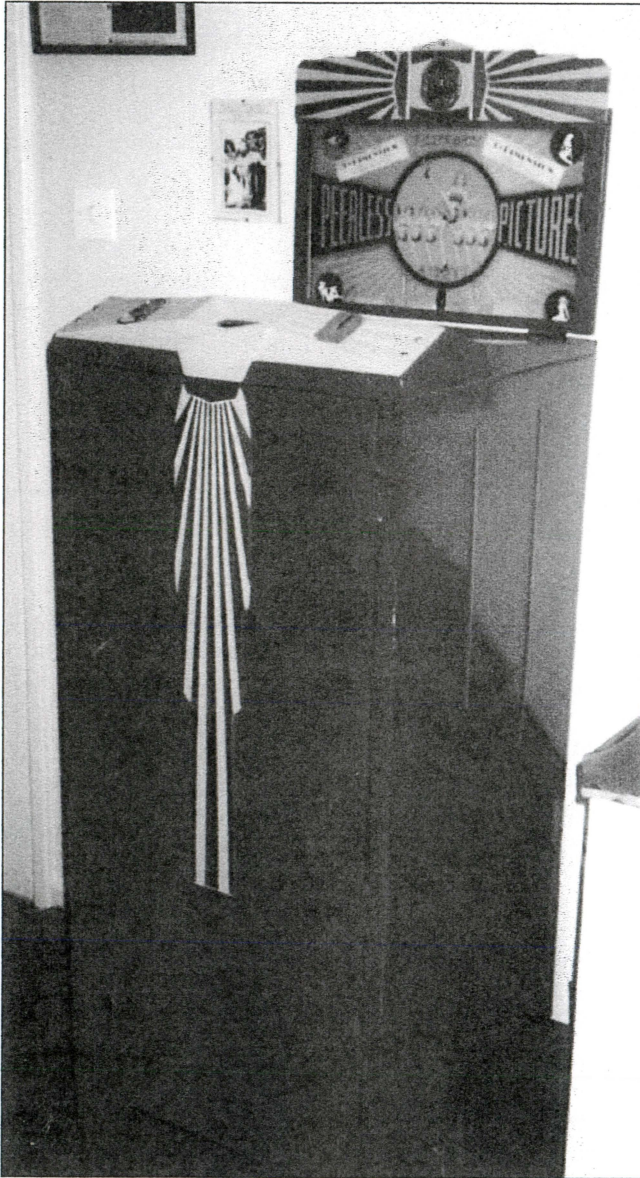
I guess most collectors of vintage slot machines have their own particular favourites, having memories of playing them in their younger days. Among my own collection of these wonderful relics of a bygone age, one of my personal favourites is the floor standing **Peerless Pictures** stereo viewer. Many city and seaside amusement arcades housed one of these lovely machines, back in the good old days of simple pleasures. They usually showed pictures of scantily clad or sometimes nude ladies (very risqué at the time)! These machines attracted mainly curious males, who for six pennies could view six different series of cards (one penny per set). On seaside holidays back in the 1940s and '50s, very often at the North Shore Pleasure Beach (now long gone), as a young lad with early sexual awakenings, much to the disapproval of my parents, I would join the 'gabardine mac brigade' and have a few pennies worth. Though I think my dad had a sneaky look too.

Manufactured by Peerless Enterprises Ltd., based in Tooting, London. Although produced in 1946, this metal-bodied machine is classic art deco in its design, with nicely shaped contours and a colourful glass fronted backflash, featuring a line of dancing girls. The wording on the backflash reads 'Natural vision 3 dimension, it comes right at you in glowing realism', which is actually achieved by looking through a simple thick magnified split double lens to create the effect. It has a front cabinet opening, giving easy access to its intriguing electrically driven mechanism, the whole of which pulls out on a metal tray. I know some arcade operators find viewers to be a little troublesome at times, but since I purchased this machine, it has never let me down.

I don't know how many of these floor-standing viewers Peerless produced or how many still survive, but back in my youth I never dreamt that one day I would actually own one. I consider it to be one of my best ever purchases, which provides me with great memories of days gone by. It beats hands down anything seen in today's modern electronic, plastic and fibreglass filled arcades.

*Johnny Burley*





# You too can be a Computer Genius

By Richard Brewerton

When I left school, I started work at the Post Office Telephones, later to become BT. In a job for life, they said. Well, it was for me, until I took early retirement thirty-two years later. I had spent most of this time installing telephone exchanges, and then towards the end ripping them all out again as they were replaced by computer-controlled exchanges. Now I see people seeking old Post Office uniselectors to complete a project, and I must have scrapped thousands of them. Why are some people gifted and can make shrewd investments for the future? It's no good saying "if I knew then, what I know now", I need to know what's cheap now but will soon be worth a mint. Is it amusement machines? Anyway, if I had been smarter years ago, I could be sitting on a huge stockpile of old uniselectors now. Not quite the same I suppose, but the thing is, you never know what's coming.

Having spent all my working days on electro-mechanical stuff, the computer age arrived without interesting me much. This didn't especially bother me, as I had no need for a personal computer. When I tried to drag myself into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by doing all my household accounts and making a backup file to store them, I ended up losing the lot. So I went back to the tried and tested pen and paper. At least I haven't lost that yet.

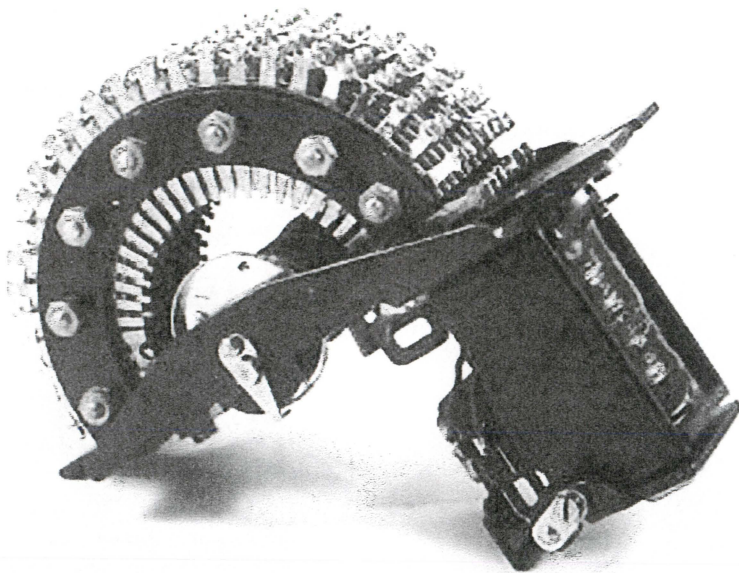
What has all this got to do with mechanical machines? I'm getting there, so hang on a bit. I think my initial disinterest in computers was because if I found something didn't work, I would get a circuit diagram and a tester, and take it to pieces and check it out. You could then see the reason why it didn't work and you could fix it. Nowadays it's a software problem, or one bit's not compatible with another, or you're not in the correct file or menu. You don't get a diagram to work through, but have to manage with an instruction leaflet written in gibberish in ten different languages. When I got to the point that I couldn't program the video recorder anymore, I sort of gave up on computers.

It didn't matter, you don't need a computer to restore a 1950s allwin, or so I thought. The mechanical bits are straightforward; the wooden cabinet not too much of a problem, but how to deal with the printed backflash that was cracking and flaking before my eyes? I didn't have a clue. The only thing I could think of was to trace the old picture and to copy it onto card, and then laboriously repaint it. My machine was a Whales chocolate allwin, the one with the Swiss scene – luckily not too complicated for me to reproduce. Anyway, some weeks later the finished result looked OK. Picasso would have been proud of it, and I was pleased.

But nowadays everything revolves around computers, and you can't go long without being forced to use one. We all need to send emails now, and get information off the internet. That was how I first found the pennymachines website; that was how I learnt to access the resources file, and that was how I found out that the exact same picture that I had spent ages painting was available to download. That was how I learnt how to download pictures and files, and that was how my machine now sports a genuine backflash and topflash.

I hadn't finished yet though. After reading Stuart Dale's recent articles in MMM about restoring artwork, I was further inspired and have now learnt how to scan an award card, and then using PhotoShop managed to touch-up the bits that had got scratched off, and re-coloured the bits that had faded. Result. So now I know I can't do anything without a computer and am now a fully paid up member of the computer age. The video recorder is still a bit of a mystery though.

***Richard Brewerton***



*As I have half a page to fill here, just in case there's anyone who doesn't know what a unisector looks like, here's one I bought on ebay a couple of weeks ago. As a point of interest, it's not an ex GPO type, it's actually an MOD version. Ed.*

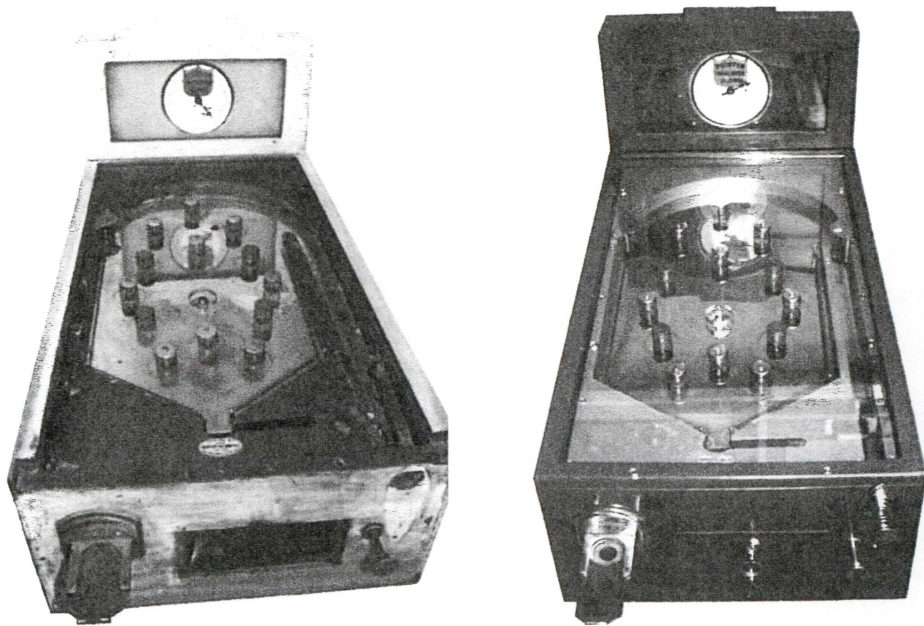


# Stuart's Pinball

By Jerry Chattenton

Last month, Stuart Dale related the story of the acquisition and restoration of his latest project: an early electro-mechanical pinball machine. A sticker affixed to the machine indicated that it was supplied by Hooper's Automatic Supply Co Ltd., of 146 Pentonville Road, London, but Stuart quite naturally wanted to know who actually made it. My first guess would have been that it was an American import, but not being an expert on pinballs, would have been more than happy to keep my mouth shut!

When Stuart emailed me the before and after pictures, I have to say I was very impressed with his work; the transformation from basket-case to fully restored is a credit to Stuart's dedication and practical abilities. However, one thing bugged me, and that was the mechanical score-keeping device on the back box. A pointer and dial seemed totally out of place on such a machine, as these early pinballs usually kept score with a series of light bulbs, either exposed, or more usually behind a silk-screened back glass.

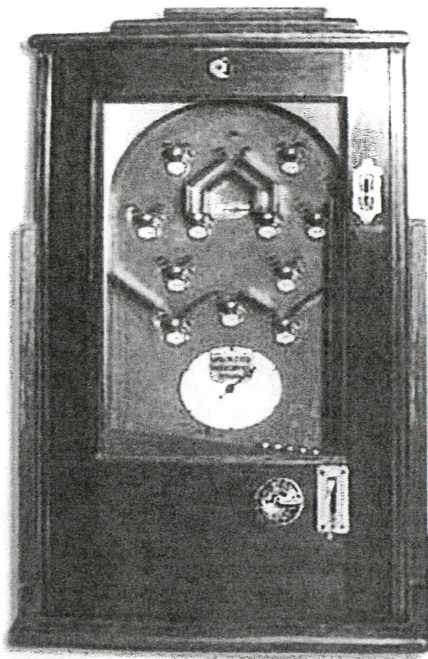


*Stuart's pinball, before and after.*

The more I thought about it, the more the dial looked familiar. So, applying the slotties' first rule of investigation, I consulted 'Carters book' *Arcades and Slot Machines*, as I knew it contained a picture of a Hoopers wall machine (on page 72, as it turns out). Sure enough, the machine has a score-keeping dial identical to that on Stuart's pinball.

So it would appear that Hoopers did indeed produce Stuart's pinball, or at least that there is some connection between it and the Hooper wall machines. Unfortunately, very little is known about Hoopers, or the machines they produced. Interestingly, there seems to be a discrepancy with the company name, and their trading address. Stuart's pinball is marked 'supplied by Hooper's Automatic Supply Co. Ltd., 146 Pentonville Road', but Paul Braithwaite claims that the company was trading as Hooper's Automatics in the 1930s (the era of Stuart's pinball), and that they didn't actually start trading as Hooper's Automatic Supply Co. Ltd. until 1955, which is far too late for the pinball machine. In addition, they moved from Pentonville Road in the late 1930s.

So, I'm not sure where this leaves us. Perhaps I've just created more questions. If anyone has any information about Hoopers or their machines, please let me know. In the meantime, I'm looking forward to Stuart's next project, just to see if he can come up with any more questions I can't answer!



*1930s Hoopers wall machine. A colour version of this picture can be viewed in the museum on the pennymachines website (under skill machines).*

# Inside Electro-mech. Part 2

By Robert Rowland

Here is the second part of my mini series, Inside Electro-mech. Today we are looking at an electro-mechanical wall machine from the 1960s called **Top Ten**. This slot is themed on famous pop stars of the time, the winning stars from left to right are: Adam Faith 4d, Cliff Richard 2d, Elvis Presley 12d, Billy Fury 2d and Frank Ifield 6d. There was also a 'miss' at each end. This miss idea came from the TV show at the time, Jukebox Jury, where a panel of experts listened to a latest 45 rpm record, then they voted it a hit or a miss. So miss was another word for loser. The top Ten was a fascinating machine in the 1960s, and the constant flashing attract mode drew you towards it.

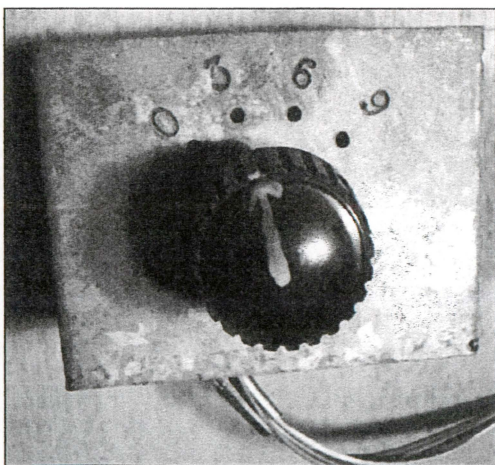
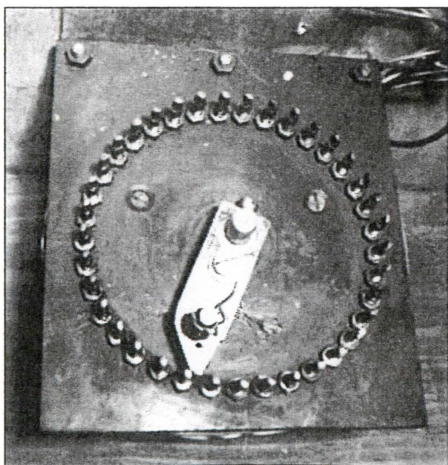




As we look inside the machine, bottom right we have a round selector wheel with thirty-seven positions, which selected the winner. But there is also a four position switch that could be set by the operator to prevent certain winners coming up. If the knob was set to position 9, Elvis (12d win) would never come up when a bet was placed on him. The selector itself is random, but position 9 triggers a relay to cut in on a 12d win, and instead of Elvis lighting up, the misses at both ends are lit. There were a few similar machines around at the time which did the same – **Royal Ascot, Autofruit, Starlet** (all housed in the same style cabinet).

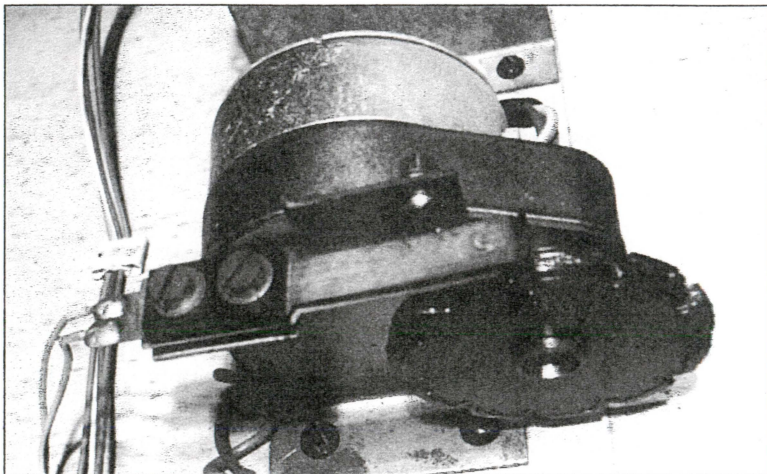
As a twelve year old kid in 1966, I can still recall the amount of times we watched these machines, trying to work out a valid sequence. We wrote down the winner each time (in attract mode) and we noticed we had loads of 12d wins on our list. Of course, whenever we bet on the 12d, it never came up! I feel sure that most of the operators here in Mablethorpe had their slots set on the dreaded position 9. It's been mentioned in this magazine before, but illegal or not (I don't know), who can really blame the operator for wanting to take more? (Not sure I agree Rob, but that's another story. **Ed.**)

At the time, we never guessed that anything like this was going on inside these machines. I've only found out these facts in later years, as I now own a Top Ten in my personal collection. I have discovered that by turning the knob to position 6, the 6d win (Frank Ifield) can also be reduced, bringing the miss in on certain occasions (again, only when a bet has been placed on Frank Ifield). If the knob is turned to position 0, the miss never comes up, neither does Elvis. The Elvis 12d win will only come up (when you have bet on him), when the switch is set to position 3. Playing on my machine at home, this slot takes good money – and that's with it set to pay the 12d win (position 3), so there was no need to install this cheat. Only the operators knew that us kids would never have the thrill of getting the Elvis 12d win.



*Left, the main rotary switch that selects the winner. Right, the 'rigging' switch.*

On a fairer note, this machine also has a *mixer*, a small motor-driven wheel with notches cut into it, and a leaf switch in contact with its periphery. As the wheel turns, the contacts of the switch are normally closed, but as each notch comes into contact with the switch, the contacts are broken for a few seconds. As the circuit is broken, the selector stops turning for those few seconds, so for each game, the selector runs for a different amount of time, meaning that it is impossible to work out any sort of system on this particular machine.



*The mixer in top Ten, which controls the selector cycle.*

These mixers started to turn up in many electro-mechanical machines in the 1960s, the Brenco **Wheel of Fortune** being a prime example. As kids, we emptied loads of these machines, then later models turned up with a mixer fitted. This ultimately ended our little game, although it was damn good while it lasted. Going back to the Top Ten, it was still a great game to play on at the time, despite that hidden secret knob.

I hope this second part of my Inside Electro-mech. series has shed a little more light on the world of electro-mechanical wall machines. The final part of the series next month will look at a slot called Rotofruit, where skill wasn't all that was needed to actually win.

See you all next issue.

***Robert Rowland***

# Word search

By Stuart Dale

Bryans Machines – How many can you find?

PENDULUM	BULLION	RIPPLER	CLOCK
ELEVENSES	ALLSPORT	FIVEWIN	FORKS
WATERFALL	PAYRAMID	ROCKETS	GAPWIN
QUADMATIC	WINDMILL	SATELITE	PILWIN

J	Q	L	X	G	S	L	S	P	K	J	B	M	H	F	G	X	F	A	O
D	E	I	S	J	B	P	A	Y	R	A	M	I	D	M	N	N	K	O	F
W	L	T	K	X	H	P	S	B	X	V	I	P	E	N	W	K	W	P	I
Y	T	S	I	X	F	J	R	P	R	P	H	D	G	U	I	G	I	D	Q
M	R	N	M	L	R	J	K	L	P	P	E	N	D	U	L	U	M	H	V
W	O	I	Q	M	E	O	X	V	E	A	J	L	X	O	V	C	Y	L	H
L	P	W	Y	Y	Y	T	O	R	N	S	A	F	L	N	G	T	F	C	H
X	S	P	K	P	Z	C	A	L	D	K	S	D	U	W	J	C	K	M	H
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### **Wanted**

BDR fruit machine and an original stand. Also parts for the same, I would consider a spare parts machine.  
Also wanted, Hawtins metal cased allwin or parts for the same.

Dave 07966 438968

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### **For Sale**

Two 1950s Corinthian bagatelles, £30 each. Bar top Shooter, made in Chicago 1948, in good working order. £250

May swap W.H.Y?  
Bill 01642 710834 (Middlesbrough)

---

### **Wanted**

Chromed Bryans Bullion topflash. Original preferred, but I would consider a good quality reproduction.

Johnny 01332 363542 (Derby)  
Or email johnnyburley@ntlworld.com

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### **Pinball Machines bought and sold**

### **Dead or Alive!**

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Data East pinball parts  
Most items available

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1" barrel length, ¾" dia.  
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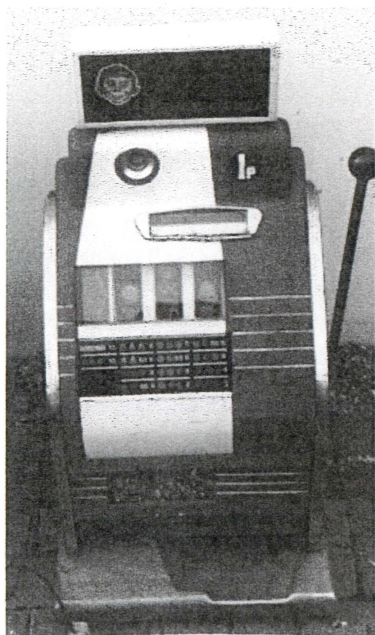
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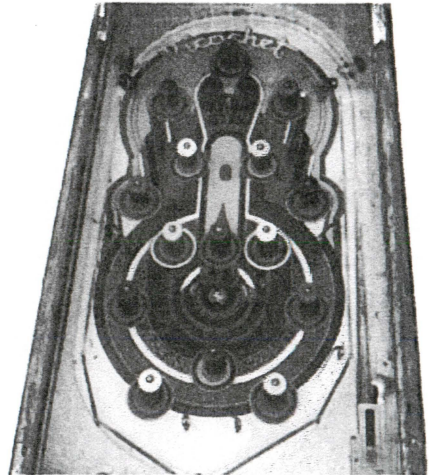
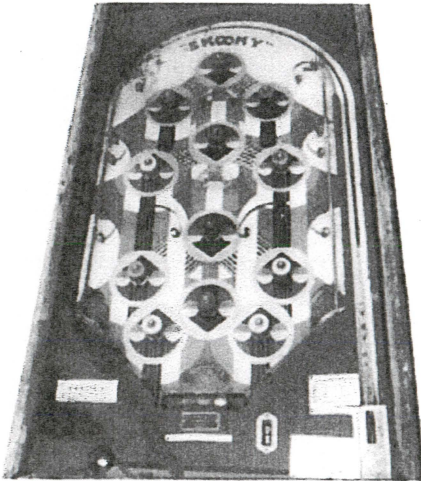
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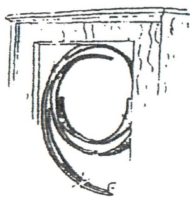


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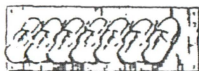
## ALLWIN TRACK

Grooved & chromed just like the original.

*Inner* with flat & nipple  
17½" inside length  
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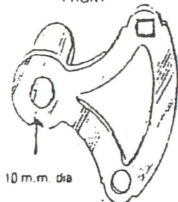


Win Tabs Red printer  
on Silver foil sticky  
backed 12 on a sheet



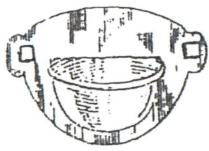
CHROMED 7 ball win  
gallery. 6 x 1. 9/16

CHROMED TRIGGER  
FRONT

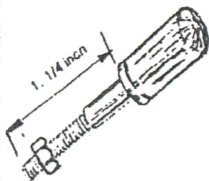


10 m.m. dia

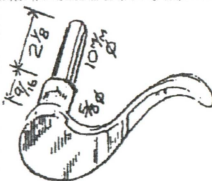
CHROMED PAYOUT BOWL



2½ inch dia cup 2 x 0.25 inch fixing  
squares at 3.75 inch centres.

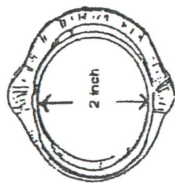


CHROMED THUMB  
STOP



TRIGGER

CHROMED KNOB SHIELD



2 x tapped M5 fixing holes on  
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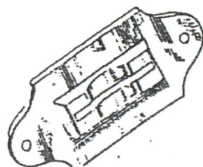
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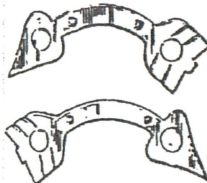
N13 Spandrells £14.99

N14 Allwin Track  
inner £19.00  
middle £19.00  
outer £23.50  
set of 3 £47.00

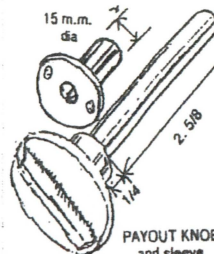
All prices include  
VAT @ 17.5% and P&P.  
Discount for quantity  
orders - please ring.



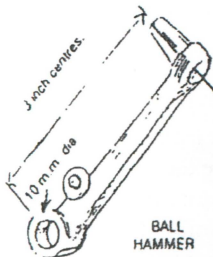
COIN SLOT  
to suit 2p but can  
be filed bigger



CHROMED ARROWS  
Reversible.

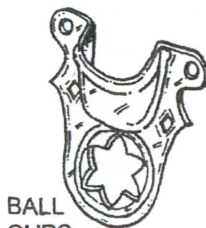


PAYOUT KNOB  
and sleeve



BALL  
HAMMER

SPANDRELLS



BALL  
CUPS



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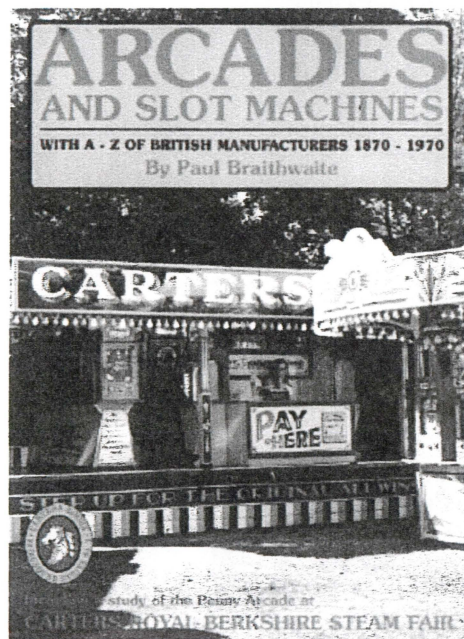
This volume captures Watling Manufacturing Company's full range from scales to bandits in catalogues, brochures, line folders, broadsides and service data, original patent and mock-up photos of the ROL-A-TOR line, artists' preparatory airbrush renderings for advertising and promotional material and Watling family photos and correspondence. Plenty of legendary anecdotes and well-informed context in the accompanying commentary. Hardback, 192 pages, b/w. **Price: £15**

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